

A WARSHIP IN ACTION.

Interesting Account of One Who Knows His Subject and Tells It Well to "Optic" Readers.

To the Editor of the Optic.

EAST LAS VEGAS, March 22.—People who read about modern warships in action, of the thunder and deafening noise made by the ponderous guns and the clouds of smoke and steam by which the iron fighting machines are enveloped, have only a faint idea at best of the real state of affairs, and no picture can do the matter full justice, if the reports of those who have been there may be believed.

To the novice the discharge of a big gun is a startling thing and may be followed by unpleasant results unless the usual precautions are taken. The men brace themselves for the shock which follows the discharge of a big gun by holding the arms rigid and the hands well away from the body, to give the lungs free play. They also keep the mouth open, and by that means equalize the pressure on the lungs, head and eardrums.

The well known fact that men who use cotton in their ears experience more trouble than those who use no external protection shows that there is much to fear from vacuum and the natural pressure from within. Burst eardrums and ruptured blood vessels are less likely to follow the discharge of big guns when those who stand near by keep their mouths open and their arms extended from the body.

To illustrate the force of air concussion, it was stated that during target practice on board the "Atlanta" some time ago, a sheep was killed outright by the shock following the discharge of an 8-inch gun, although the gun was behind a barrette and the sheep 30 feet away. At another time, also on the "Atlanta," two 6-inch broadside guns were discharged several times, and then it was discovered that the cutters and whaleboats which were suspended on davits fifteen feet over the guns and to the rear of the muzzles opened in the joints, although they were well built and seaworthy small craft. Another similar circumstance was mentioned in connection with target practice on board the "New York." The two 8-inch guns in the forward turret have a range of about 120 degrees on either side of the keel, and on this occasion one of the guns was ranged about 30 degrees forward of the beam and fired with a reduced charge. Twenty feet away were several signals, and near these was a signal chest with all the ship's signal paraphernalia. All of these, chest and in, were scattered in all directions by the discharge of the gun and rendered useless.

The noise made by the discharge of heavy pieces is less painful to the sense of hearing than that produced by smaller arms. The excitement connected with handling the guns or passing the charges does much to make one forget the noise, and the smell of the burning powder has an intoxicating effect which lends a charm to the situation. A man who has charge of an 8-inch gun is allowed about three minutes to load and fire his piece. Smaller guns are fired more rapidly. Gunners have been known to fire a 6-inch gun at a target two miles away so rapidly that five shots were in the air before the first one struck. That is work over which anyone will forget his surroundings.

W. W. CURTIS.

Naturalists declare that the kestrel is possessed of such wonderful powers of sight that it is able to see a mouse when it is itself at such a height in the air that it is invisible to the naked human eye.

Germany is about to try an interesting experiment in the administration of judicial oaths, in the hope of diminishing the number of perjury cases. The witnesses will be asked to make an unsworn statement in court, and will then be required to swear to it, first being permitted to withdraw or correct any part of his testimony. Heavy penalties are provided for the wilful making of false statements in court.

The ship Henry B. Hyde has made the trip from San Francisco to Honolulu in nine days and four and one-half hours. Only one other sailing ship has ever equaled this time, the clipper Fair Wind having sailed the distance in eight days and seventeen and one-half hours.

A special designation is given to the reign of each Chinese Emperor. That of Taai-t'ien, the present noble specimen of Oriental royalty, is Koonong-su, which means "the continuation of splendor." Such is the sarcasm of fate.

Goldfish are of Chinese origin. They were originally found in a large lake near Mt. Tientsing and were first brought to Europe in the seventeenth century. The first in France came as a present to Mme. de Pompadour.

The marine lamprey's adhesive power is such that 121 pounds may be raised without forcing it to loose its hold. It is so tenacious of life that its head remains for hours attached to a stone when its body is severed.

Flies are not the only things found in amber; in a big mass of clear amber, dredged out of the Baltic Sea recently, there was distinctly visible in its interior a small squirrel—fur, teeth and claws intact.

M. Chaplain has been ordered by the Government to omit the legend "Dieu protege la France" from the edge of the coins he is engraving. The motto has been used ever since Napoleon became Consul.

Simla, India, is built on the sides of a steep hill, and the roof of one house is often on a level with the foundation of one in the next tier.

A polyglot magazine, printed in 12 languages, is to be published in St. Louis.

The first public bath in England for hot bathing purposes was opened in 1679.

Certificate of Publication.

TERRITORY OF NEW MEXICO,
Auditor's Office, Insurance Department,
Office of Auditor of Public Accounts,
Santa Fe, N. M., February 23, 1898.

For the year ending December 31, 1898.

It is hereby certified, That the Fire Association of Philadelphia, a corporation organized under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, whose principal office is located at Philadelphia, Pa., has complied with all the requirements of Chapter 46, of the laws of New Mexico, passed in '82, entitled "An Act regulating Insurance Companies," approved February 28, '82 (amended April 3, '84, and February 26, '85, and House Bill No. 81, approved March 17, '97, being Chapter 49, Laws of '97) so far as the requirements of said Acts are applicable to said Company, for the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety eight.

In testimony whereof, I, Marcelino Garcia, Auditor of Public Accounts for the Territory of New Mexico, have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office, at the City of Santa Fe, the day and year first above written.

MARCELINO GARCIA,
Auditor of Public Accounts.

Synopsis of Statement of the
Fire Association of Philadelphia,
January 1, 1898.

Assets.....	\$6,127,050.8
Liabilities, including capital..	4,815,109.46
Net surplus.....	\$1,311,941.36
1-44	

A new plant of extraordinary beauty, discovered in the Himalayas. If placed on a shelf in a moderately warm room, the dry bulb, without having been planted, produces a flower that unfolds and blooms in midwinter.

The entire area of the United States is placed at 3,536,017,692 acres, of which 741,702,365 acres is now owned by individuals or by corporations of states, or has passed out of the control of the general government.

The average length of life is thirty-one years.

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with final return limit of six months from
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Tourist rates to Phoenix, Arizona, and
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Agent.
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NEW GOLD FIELDS

Recent sensational gold discoveries in the Red River district, Northern New Mexico, indicate that this locality will shortly be as widely celebrated as Cripple Creek. Already the rush of miners and prospectors has begun, and by the time the snow has fully melted, thousands will be on the ground.

Take the Santa Fe Route to Springer, N. M., from which point there is a stage daily to Elizabethtown, Hematite and Red River City. For further particulars apply to

CHAS. F. JONES, Agt.

Cuba is said to occupy the third place in education among the Latin-American countries, for in each 100 inhabitants eight can read in Uruguay, six in Argentina, five in Cuba, 4.7 in Mexico, 4.5 in Venezuela, 4.1 in Chile, 2.1 in Brazil, and still fewer in the others.

There are 284 industrial courts of arbitration and conciliation in the German empire. The president may be neither an employer nor a working man, and the other members are elected, one-half by employers and the other half by the working men.

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